

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 2257

EXDIS

USSALTTWO

E.O.11652:
GDS

TAGS: PARM SALT NATO UR US
SUBJECT: REFLECTIONS ON PRAVDA EDITORIAL ON SALT

REF: (A) MOSCOW 2067, (B) MOSCOW 2162

SUMMARY: A REVIEW OF PRAVDA FEBRUARY 11 EDITORIAL
ARTICLE ON SALT SUGGESTS CERTAIN INCONSISTENCIES WITH THE
SOVIET NEGOTIATING POSITION, PARTICULARLY ON ALCM AS WELL
AS ON GLCM AND SLCM. OTHER SUBJECTS (E.G., MIRV SUB-
CEILING) ARE NOT DISCUSSED BY PRAVDA, WHICH MAY INDICATE
NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY. WE FEEL THAT THE TIMING OF THIS
PEICE IS LARGELY THE RESULT OF GROWING IMPATIENCE WITH
DELAY IN CONCLUDING AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE 11 FEB. PRAVDA EDITORIAL
ARTICLE AND COMPARISON WITH REPORTS FORM THE SALT II
NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA LEADS US TO THE FOLLOWING CONCLU-
SIONS REGARDING THE IMPACT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS

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UNUSUAL SOVIET PUBLIC STAND:

-- ALCM: PRAVDA ASSERTED THAT ALCM'S SHOULD BE ALLOWED
ONLY ON HEAVY BOMBERS BECAUSE TO PERMIT THEM ON OTHER
AIRCRAFT, ESPECIALLY TRANSPORTS, WOULD BE TO "ALLOW AN
UNCONTROLLED NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT TO APPEAR, STUFFED
WITH TENS OF ALCM'S". AS A RESULT, THE EDITORIAL CON-

TINUED, THE LIMITATIONS OF THE TREATY WOULD BE WORTHLESS AND THE SOVIETS WILL NOT SIGN SUCH A SCRAP OF PAPER. THIS CHARACTERIZATION AND CRITICISM OF THE US POSITION IS OBVIOUSLY INACCURATE. THE US PROPOSES THAT ANY AIRCRAFT CARRY ALCM, WHATEVER ITS CHARACTERISTICS, WOULD BE DESIGNATED AS A CRUIS MISSLE CARRYING "HEAVY BOMBER" AND THUS BE SUBJECT TO THE OVERALL 1320 CEILING FOR MIRVED MISSILES AND ALCM CARRIERS. DESPITE THIS DISTORTION, THE PRAVDA PIECE SERVES TO ADD WEIGHT TOTHE OFTEN-STATED SOVIET OPPOSITION TO THE CONVERSION OF ANY CURRENT US TRANSPORTS INTO THE ROLE OF ALCM CARRIER. HOWEVER, SOVIET DELEGATE BEKETOV'S COMMENTS ON 18 JAN 78 (SALT TWO-1576; A-1983) IN EXPLANATION OF SEMENOV'S 12 JAN STATEMENT ON THIS MATTER (SALT TWO-1565), SPOKE OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW THE US TO DEVELOP AND PROCURE A NEW, SPECIALLY DESIGNED ALCM CARRIER WHOSE CHARACTERISTICS COULD BE ALONG THE LINES OF ACURRENT WIDE-BODIED TRANSPORT LIKE THE C-5. THUS THE MISREPRESENTATION IN THE PRAVDA EDITORIAL COMBINED WITH THE BEKETOV CLARIFICATION SUGGEST THAT THERE MAY STILL BE SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY IN THE SOVIET POSITION TO PERMIT THE US SSE WIDE BODIED AIRCRAFT TO CARRY ALCM, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED. THE ARTICLE FAILS TO NOTE THE DISCUSSIONS OVER HOW TO MEASURE THE 2500 KM MAXIMUM RANGE FOR ALCMS BUT CLEARLY INDICATES
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THE SOVIET STAND THAT SLCMS BEYOND 2500 KM RANGE ARE TO BE PROHIBITED.

-GLCM AND SLCM: AS POINTED OUT IN REF B THE KEY POINT RAISED IN THIS REGARD IS PRAVDA'S CLAIM THAT THE SIDES HAVE AGREED TO BAN TESTING OF GLCM AND SLCM DURING THE PROTOCOLE. THIS ASSERTION IS CLEARLY AT ODDS WITH SEMENOV'S STATEMENT ON 9 NOV AND THE UPDATED JDT, 16 DEC 78. AS A RESULT, THE PRAVDA EDITORIAL INJECTS CONFUSION IN AN AREA WHERE AGREEMENT APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN REACHED. THE EDITORIALS OTHER COMPLAINTS ABOUT POSSIBLE GLCM AND SLCM DEPLOYMENT AFTER EXPIRATIONS OF THE PROTOCOL IN AREAS NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER REFLECT ONCE AGAIN SERIOUS SOVIET CONCERN ON THIS MATTER WHICH THEY WILL ALMOSS CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO ADDRESS DURING THE LIFE OF THE PROTOCOL IN SALT III.

-NONCIRCUMVENTION/NONTRANSFER: PRAVDA EXPLICITLY LINKED THIS QUIESTION TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE US MIGHT AID IN "THE APPEARANCE OF CRUISE MISSILES IN THE HANDS ITS NATO ALLIES." THE WORDING IN THE EDITORIAL IN THIS REGARD IS QUITE SIMILAR TO THAT PROVIDED BY

SEMENOV ON 24 JAN 78 (SALT TWO-1580) ALTHOUGH PRAVDA FAILS TO SPELL OUT AS PRECISELY A PROHIBITION ON US ASSISTANCE TO THIRD STATES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS. ALL IN ALL, THE EDITORIAL CLEARLY REITERATES THE SOVIET DEMAND THAT THE NEW TREATY CONTAIN AN UNAMBIGUOUS NONCIRCUMVENTION/NONTRANSFER CLAUSE.

- VERIFICATION: WHY THE SOVIETS CHOSE TO MENTION PUBLICLY "RUMORS" OF THEIR HAVING AN ASAT CAPABILITY ONLY TO DISMISS IT AS AN "ILL-INTENTIONED FABRICATION" REMAINS PUZZLING, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THIS CAPABILITY WHILE DENYING IN GENEVA ITS HAVING ANY HARMFUL EFFECTS. THE REST OF THIS SECTION OF THE
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EDITORIAL MERELY REAFFIRMS SOVIET FAITH IN THE ADEQUACY OF NTM AND THE SCC AND CLAIMS CREDIT FOR HAVING RELIEVED SOME VERIFICATION DIFFICULTIES BY HAVING ACCEPTED A TYPE RULE FOR MIRV VERIFICATION.

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- MODERNIZATION: PRAVDA'S RENDERING OF THE DIFFERING US AND SOVIET POSITIONS ON THIS QUESTION IS TENDENTIOUS AT

BEST. IT CLAIMS THAT THE US SEEKS A PROTOCOL BAN APPLIED SOLELY TO NEW TYPES OF ICBMS, WITH OR WITHOUT MIRVS, AND FAILS TO TAKE NOTE OF US EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SIMILAR PROHIBITIONS ON SLBMS. NEVERTHELESS, THE SOVIET POSITION APPEARS TECHNICALLY CORRECT AS STATED, GIVEN AMB EARLE'S 16 DEC STATEMENT THAT THE US WOULD PREFER TO ABANDON EFFORTS TO CHECK SLBM DEVELOPMENT ALTOGETHER RATHER THAN ACCEPT THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD HAVE EXEMPTED THEIR SS-NX-17, SS-NX-18, AND RSM-52 FROM ANY TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT BAN. NONETHELESS, THE PRAVDA RENDERING PUBLICLY RESTATES SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A RV ICBMS WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH THEIR STAND IN GENEVA WHERE THEY HAVE CALLED FOR LATITUDE TO TEST ONE NEW ICBM OF THIS TYPE.

- BACKFIRE: THE EDITORIAL REPEATS THE LONGHELD SOVIET POSITION THAT THE BACKFIRE CANNOT BE COVERED WITHIN THE TREATY. THE ASSERTION THAT "ALL NECESSARY EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING THIS PLANE HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROVIDED TO THE SECRET

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US "CAN BE READ AS RELUCTANTLY CONCEDED THE LEGITIMACY OF US REQUESTS FOR SUCH INFORMATION AND PERHAPS FOR COLLATERAL ASSURANCES REGARDING ITS DEPLOYMENT AS WELL. THE ARTICLE'S CITATION OF US FBS IN REBUTTING US OBJECTIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE IN FLIGHT REFUELING OF BACKFIRE SEEMS STRAINED BUT COULD PRESAGE SOVIET RESISTANCE TO ANY COLLATERAL CONSTRAINTS ON REFUELING CAPABILITIES.

- REDUCTIONS: THE FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS AGAINST SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS IN SALT II LINKED WITH THE COMMENTS ABOUT GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS, FBS AND ALLIED NUCLEAR WEAPONS SEEM DIRECTED AT THE EXTERNAL CRITICS RATHER THAN THE ADMINISTRATION ITSELF SINCE SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS ARE NOW AGREED TO BE THE BUSINESS OF SALT III. PRAVDA SIMPLY NOTES AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE FOR REDUCTION OF THE INITIAL 2400 AGGREGATE IN SALT II DURING THE COURSE OF THE TREATY WITHOUT MENTIONING THE SOVIET POSITION ON THE SIZE OF THIS REDUCTION (150) OR ITS TIMING. THIS MAY INDICATE CONTINUED FLEXIBILITY ON THESE QUESTIONS.

2. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING TO SPECULATE ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE EDITORIAL'S FAILURE TO COMMENT ON OTHER UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION TO MAINTAINING SILENCE REGARDING SOVIET POSITIONS ON THE SIZE AND TIMING OF REDUCTIONS IN THE OVERALL AGGREGATE DURING SALT II, NOTED ABOVE, IT FAILS TO DISCLOSE CURRENT DIFFERENCES ON THEMIRV SUBCEILING THUS LEAVING THEMSELVES FLEXIBILITY TO GO LOWER THEN THEIR CURRENT 1250 PROPOSAL.

THE ARTICLE ALSO IGNORES CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS ON SUCH MATTERS AS BOMBER VARIANTS, THE DATA BASE, AND MISSILE TEST NOTIFICATION, BUT THESE OMISSIONS MAY WELL BE EXPLAINED BY THE PROXIMITY OUR POSITIONS ON THESE ISSUES.

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3. IN REVIEWING THE PRAVDA EDITORIAL ARTICLE, OUR EARLIER CONVICITON IS REINFORCED THAT MOSCOW IS ANXIOUS TO BRING SALT-II TO A RAPID CONCLUSION. MOSCOW HAS STAKED OUT AREAS WHERE IT WILL NOT GIVE ANY MORE, BUT IT IS ALSO SIGNALLING ITS IMPATIENCE WITH WHAT IT RAGARDS AS UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN NEGOTIATIONS. THIS, OF COURSE, IS A FAMILIAR SOVIET NEGOTIATING TACTIC AND WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT MOSCOW HOPES THAT A RUSH TO COMPLETION COULD GIVE IT CERTAIN SMALL ADVANTAGE BY LEAVING SOME LANGUAGE OBSCURE.

4. THE PRESENT SOVIET LEADERSHIP APPEARS UNITED IN ITS COMMITMENT OT A SALT-II AGREEMENT. DOBRYNIN'S REPORT, AND PONOMAREV'S RECENT EXCHANGES IN WASHINGTON MAY HAVE HEIGHTENED SOVIET CONCERN THAT DOMESTIC OPPOSITION IN THE US CUULD JEOPARDIZE THE DRAFT TREATY IN THE SENATE. PRAVDA PIECE REPRESENTS A CHARACTERISTICALLY HEAVY HANDED EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM. THUS, IN CHARGING US BACKSLIDING MOSCOW IN ITS CLUMSY WAY APPEARS TO BE EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE CONSEQUENCES OF FURTHER DELAY AS THE US POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SEASON LOOMS NEARER. MOSCOW, WE WOULD GUESS, STRONGLY OPPOSES MUCH FURTHER DELAY IN SIGNING SINCE A) THIS WOULD PUT OFF SENATORIAL CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT TREATY FOR NEARLY A YEAR, AND THE PIECES MAY BE HARD TO PUT BACK TOGETHER AT THAT TIME AND B) CONTINUED DELAY COULD CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE SOVIETS IN STAYING WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF THE INFORMALLY EXTENDED INTERIM AGREEMENT. WHETHER THESE SOVIET CONCERNS WILL BE REFLECTED IN A GREATER WILLINGNESS TO MAKE FURTHER SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS IN GENEVA REMAIS TO BE SEEN. MATLOCK

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